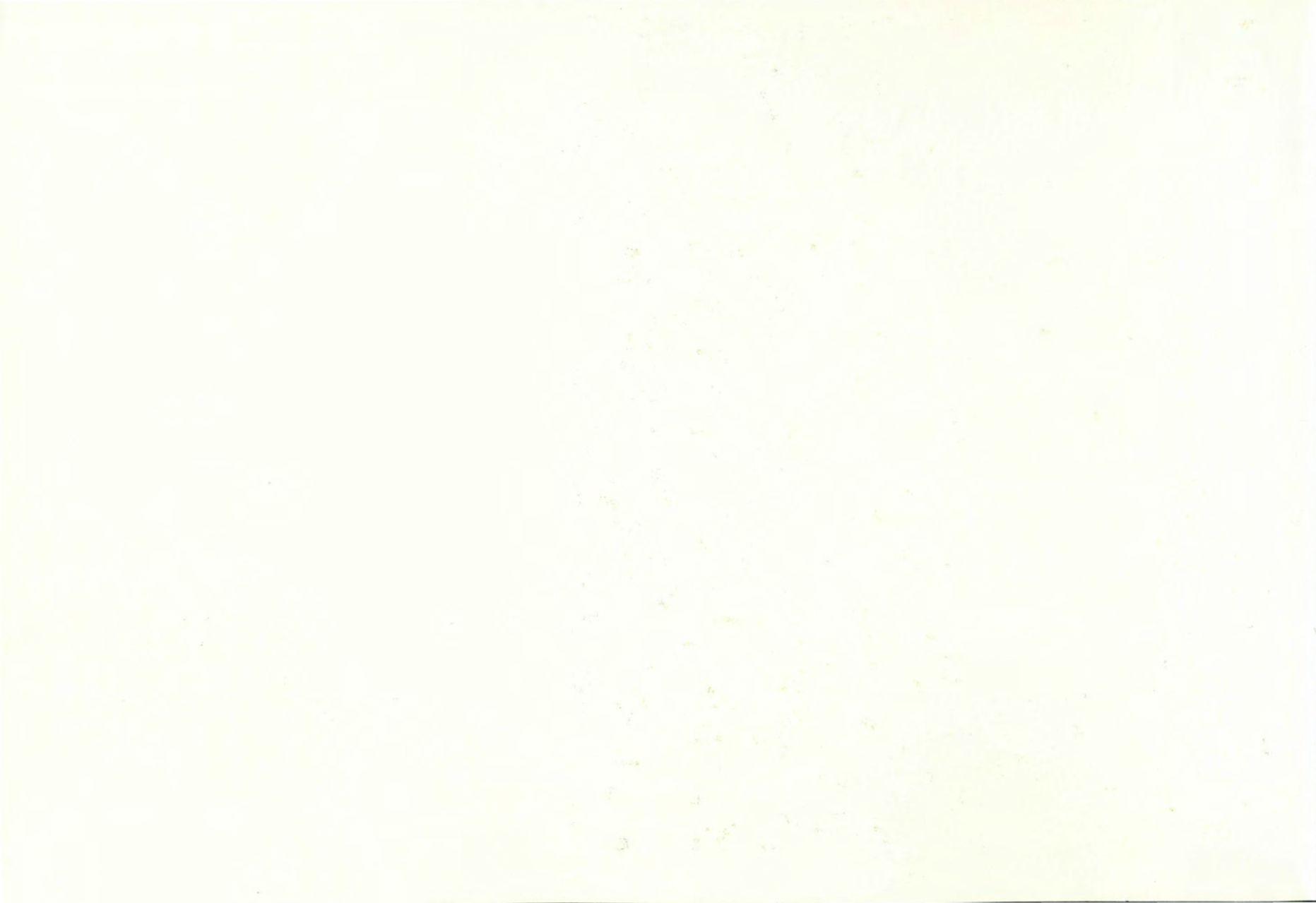




chrysalis



chrysalis

Winter, '71
Vol. 15, No. 1



"chrys-a-lis /kris-e-les/ n: an insect pupa quiescent in a firm case"

—Webster

The artists represented in this Winter Edition use the written word sometimes, or film, or paintbrush to recreate that minute meaning which lies dormant in even the most mundane human experience.

Chrysalis is a modest title, for here is contained the full-grown butterfly of student achievement.

We are especially pleased to include, for the first time, student artwork which has hitherto been limited to the walls of Duke.



A special thanks to Steve Zapton for his much-needed assistance and dedication.

Editor

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cover: "Father and Son" — Jo Ann Vining

Mercurial madness,
pushing, pulling me
to what I am becoming,
a weedy quest for poems
has rooted in my mind.
Voices shout within my ears,
and thoughts plague restless fingers,
demanding to be written.
I play with words like dolls.
The urgency of my insanity
is all that keeps me sane.

—Elizabeth Doss

summer's end

summer tiptoes behind
a bed of mountains
as autumn is left
holding the sun.

someone has turned on
the night lights
and the sky whispers love
in pink swirls of good night:

another season sleeps
to nature's sad song.

—Judy Bentley



"... Warm is the sun on top of my head."

Photo: Linda Landbloom

Caption: K. F. N. Barker

TANG

Prologue

Breakfast for space men and champions.

I drank me
 some tang
and oh
 what a pang!
It tasted awful
especially the pull of
 it.

The orange liquid made
the flesh clear
and all were seers
 of all.

The pain
 came
when they wouldn't
 couldn't
take off their hats
 to see me.

So, you see,
 they weren't
seers after all.

Epilogue

Because of this I had to break fast.

—Judy Bentley

city park

colourlessman
runs his hand
behind the 5:00 wall
feeling for a bottle,
then empties away
with no money pockets
and marbles gone.

—Judy Bentley



"Reverse #1" — Robert Frank Evans

MAL de MER

— Sara Arason

She paused before descending into the seething mass at the foot of the stairs. She had to give everyone a chance to see her at her best. They all wanted to see the beautiful lady. So, she paused, and nonchalantly posed for all eyes—the picture of grace.

From above, the ballroom was an ocean of colors, deep blues, gay oranges, and the incessant silver sparkles of diamonds, now here, now there. As she noticed all this she felt a sharp pain in her stomach—as if she had swallowed a pebble. It was only nerves. She was amazed that after all the parties she had been to, she still became nervous.

Adoration and envy were the only eyes that watched the black-clad goddess float down the steps. The tide drew back at the bottom, as breaths drew in—unbelieving. Her skin so white, her hair so black. The eyes, her only jewels, were brighter than any diamond or crystal chandelier. She nodded to the musicians, and the music began.

A waltz. The room began to swell and fall to the calm, smooth throb that filled the air. ONE-two-three, ONE-two-three. They danced, swaying back and forth like a strange under-water garden at the mercy of the tide.

She too danced. No one ever noticed with whom—they saw only the rhythmic, unattached elegance of her figure drifting up and down, the air around her as cool as the night wind blowing in from the ocean, soothing the scorched sand. The space between her and the world was uncrossable. As she danced, she noticed that the pain in her stomach had grown worse from flying around the room, and decided to leave the floor.

The walk across the ballroom was like walking barefoot across a coral reef. The women hated her. Their stares cut her deeply. She knew only too well how elated they would be to see her trip on her long, black dress, or spill the punch she carefully sipped, hoping to quell the uncomfortable pain. The sharper the stares, the colder the air around her became. Icy cold. They didn't see that it was not her fault that she had been given everything—she hadn't asked for it. She smiled sweetly at the eyes full of contempt and continued sipping her punch.

The waltz became a mazurka. The mass rose and fell more rapidly—pushing against the walls, then drawing back to the center. The crystalline

sparkles of the diamonds were schools of tiny silver fish—now darting here, now there—escaping some terrible enemy, churning the surface faster and faster as they fled.

Round and round the tropical liquid went, creating a centerless whirlpool. It was impossible to stand quietly on the edge. Everyone was gaily sucked into the uncontrolled maelstrom.

She resisted for a time, but was finally forced to take her partner's hand and step from the safety of the shore. She waded in reluctantly, trying to stay close to the beach. However, the tempo increased, and she soon felt herself being swept away by the beat—no longer smooth and throbbing, but wild and raging. Casting the pebble—which had become a stone—out of her mind, she abandoned herself to the swift current. She was pulled to the spinning center, hypnotized by swirling colors, and oblivious to everything but the dance.

Suddenly, she was hit by the first wave of black nausea. She grabbed her churning stomach and wrenched free of her partner in one movement. Fighting for the edge, she flailed and thrashed like a drowning man. No one understood what was happening. The music continued to push the furious tempest around her. The tides swept her in all directions—the safety of the shore was near, and then far. She struggled with all her strength, but the ocean of blinding and malevolent colors and sounds refused to release her. She sank to the floor. Then, and only then did the mass respond. It stopped to watch in horror, and disgust, and steel-hearted glee as the pitiful figure coughed, and choked, and gagged, finally throwing the contents of her stomach onto the polished floor.

Adoration was dead, and envy was happy. All eyes turned away as she slowly stood up and walked toward the door. They could not bear to see how vividly the vomit stood out on the black dress. When she reached the foot of the stairs, the beautiful lady turned to the musicians and nodded. Slowly, the music began. Slowly, the seething mass began to sway, and the tide resumed its game with the shore.

An Apple For Bonnie

If you should shake down the fruit from your eyes
And divide your heart in halves
With its secret little seeds cradled in each raw hollow—
If you should say “Eat” without one blink,
Without stopping the beat that pushes the breath
From the bowl of your open mouth—
If all this sweetness you mean to give,
That I, no applepicker, may fill my arms
With your proud harvest
And savor your severed breath in my mouth
Til all the hunger from orchardless days is done—
 If these swallowed seeds
 Should sprout in my eyes,
 Then I will never spend my breath
 For anything but apples.

—*Suzanne Underwood*

The Daydreamers

As shadows on willful wings,
We glide through each other,
Blindly soaring toward the sun,
Fearing to turn our eyes to earth
Lest we face the needs
That drive us to the clouds.
We yield to wind,
Skimming from one empty bliss to another,
'Til day adds to wasted day,
And we wake
To gray hair and cracked voices,
And despair
That we have found earth too late.

—Karla Showalter

Ditty

This won't do, love: his embraces pall!
I can't concentrate on another affair
With you miles away and wild spring in the air
I miss you more than all.

I haven't seen you since last month's rain.
When a lady's forgot, it is mischief unfair
If she cannot do likewise, as spring with a flair
Throws her both lilacs and pain.

It too is dream-stuff—I embrace it the more,
Affirming not wisest, but best to care
In love's youngest time (spring, laughing, could swear
It's heard me forever before!)

—Deborah Fairfield



—Gary Grieg

I, Herby Darden

And I cry—
Tears of rage and tears of frustration
In a world that eyes me, tin-clad Quixote.
I am encircled by crowds who carry
Armor piercing weaponry and are blind.
(They stare unblinking into nova day
And hurl their projectiles at whispers).

Scuttling rat feet rush
To nest in the back of his mind
And his hair bristles,
Brittle and tight like fear.
Batman to the telephone
His nerve ends walk tiptoe
Around the rim of the bell.
He looks forward, always forward,
To that last fatal fall,
And avoids all mirrors.
Rain ticks against the window,
Liquid sand. A demon hand
Bangs on keys, punches words—
Metronome for his world
Of little men in giant bodies.

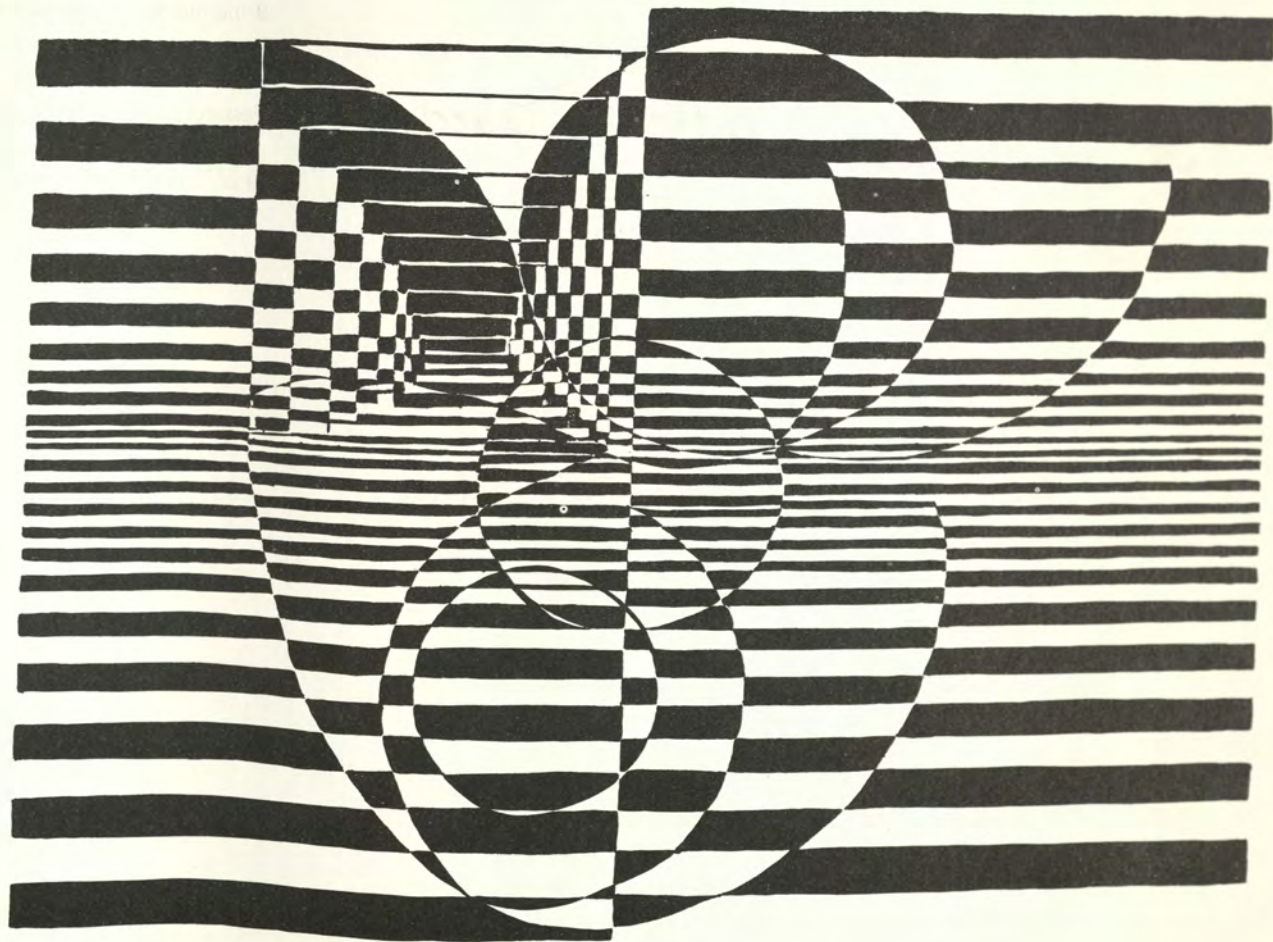
Seek me out! In holy battle
Bring me down and put my
Head on a pencil pike.
Parade it before the walls of Rome,
Fasten it to London's gates,
And if that is not enough
Then skewer me with a pink slip
Folded to a point.

Silent, with trembling lips,
He cradles receiver and parrots
The fading tinsel voice,
"I'm glad you agree,"
And damns the cold rain
As it slips away.

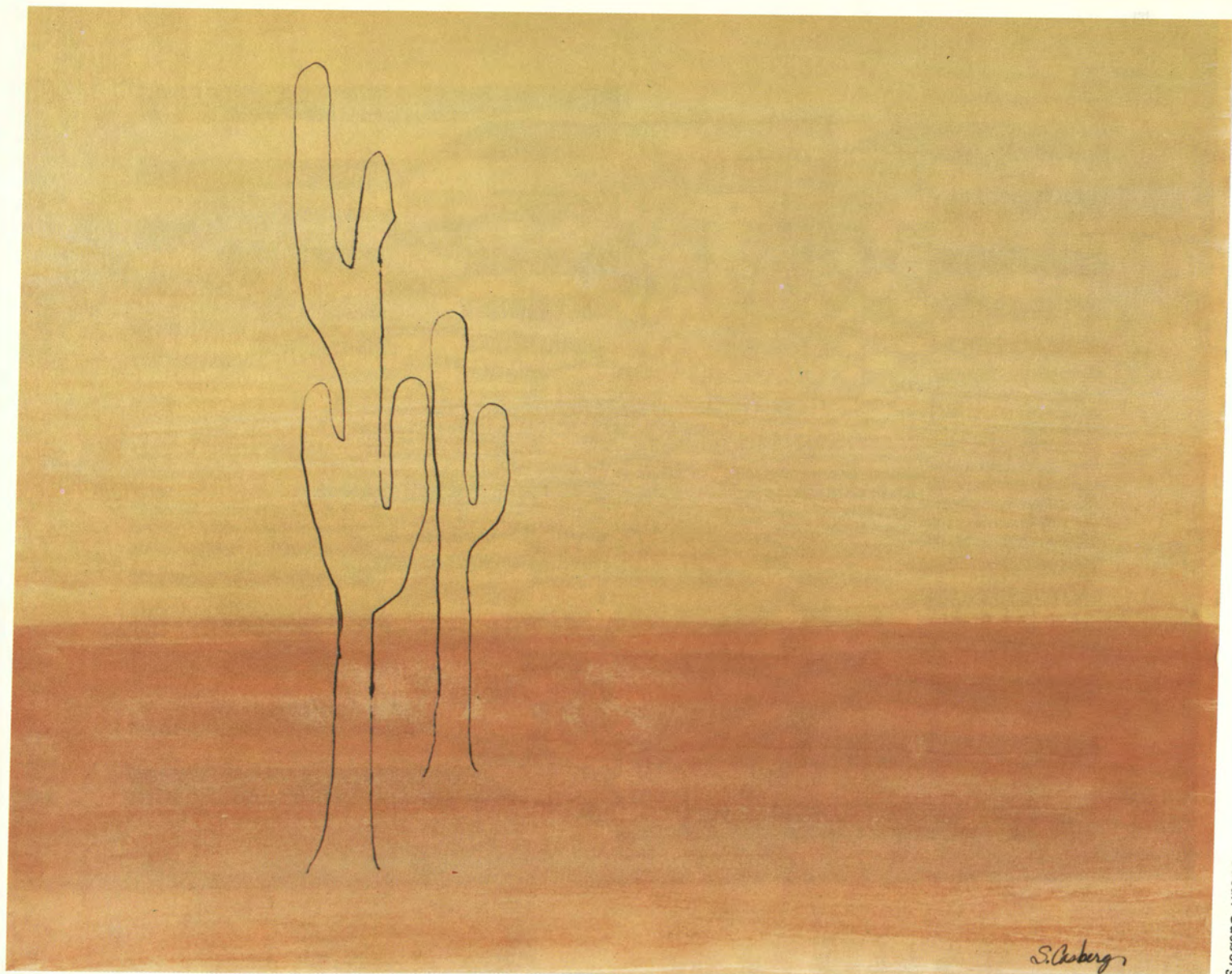
I shall rummage my desk
To gather my radio, skin lotion,
My knife and my pole.
I shall, by God,
Hurl beetle shell into dirty clothes bin,
(The maid to clean, the houseboy to wear)
To cross lowered drawbridge
And quit this race.

Pale skin glistening in sunlight,
Head cocked for the sound of rain,
He waits, heel up, crouched
For the final mad dash to serenity.

—A. Newton Likens



—Vicki Ishler



“Read with quiet passion”

I tried to give you up
To let you go
I really did . . .
I faced the truth
That we were not good
For each other . . .
When you were in my possession
I devoured you completely
Taking you, and all your sweetness
In greedy gulps,
And you, so indifferent
As though I were the multitude,
And leaving an empty cavity
To be filled with
The pain of my desire.
Yet still, I wish again
To taste the ingredients
I love and know to be in you:
Milk chocolate with soya lecithin added,
Peanut butter, sugar,
Dextrose and salt.
Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups,
I cannot resist you.

—Douglas E. Russell

Marsupial Maulers, adorned in
 kill-for medals of
 immorality
 squelched our bodies and brains
 with
 martinis mouthfuls of
 Patriotic Waste
 while similarly brain-washed
 flesh-filled
 uniforms
 which once were
 our
 Brothers and Sisters
 fell rapidly like summertime horseflies
 swatted by the
 swelled for power
 swatter
 of its political plumed *Swatter*
 and
 soon thereafter
 when the medals were all
 that were left
 the *Dead* and
 too-late-for-crying
 Ankles of the World
 wept
 under the weight
 of their
 hideous Presidential Chains
 as
 nonfunctioning floats of
 atomic clouds
 and
 uranium bladders
 paraded past
 a bowl-full
 of
 vanishing earth

—Chris Holt

I sailed through Unnatural Skies
subjected by the knowledged stud of mankind

and on my right side like post-war Southern Ladies
the malleabled Skies sadly sleeved their
dusty shame

and sorely tossed quivering smiles
at my pitiful
brow

as Crusading Stench Winds marched
me past Ranked Conquered Clouds
felled by the well-aimed vertical cannon of
their now-beaming Earthman foe

and
Unbrained physicians wept at
their failure
and non-verbal politicians
clad in black left negative solutions
to unanswered questions of salvation

and worlds of morbid migrants sorrowly
searched non-expanding reaches of
non-existent escape

as
the
Earth Man victor sat fat in his aging throne
like a king of infinite plunder
thoughtlessly unseeing his
forthcoming doom

—Chris Holt



—Betsy Keyser

Schizophrenia

My two selves watch you drive away.
One sees the band on your wrist
shining in the sun as you wave,
the other screams to follow you.
Unbid memories wet my face;
the storm you seeded is raining inside out.

And you, where is your mind
as both hands regrip the wheel?
Do you think of me, or only of that duty
Which brings our separation?
Do you, too, wish your car to fail,
or that which calls you from me
to vanish? Or do you think at all?

Your watch glitters for a moment as you disappear.
Not heeding the shouting in my ears,
I turn to go inside.

—Elizabeth Doss

Wedgewood and Delft

Weathered, windblown figurine
Sketched in tough pointillist perfection
against gravel and grainy sky,
etched in my mind's ecstasy
with supreme stillness
and halted pictured motion.
A persevering moment
fit to make my turning wheels
falter and ache at the instant necessity
of using up the road in ongoing netted time,
wincing, journeying past the empty-eyed
cornhusk walking doll of an aged man,
and catching one last wistful reflected memory—
weather-wise sage old one,
to rig himself this brittle, clear March day
with clothes of cloudless blue
and windswept grey.

—Deborah Fairfield

Winter Wood

Black, bare, bark
stretching cold and naked
through the orange fringed leaves,
spaces filled with the shimmering, white,
gleaming brilliance of the sun.

the sun,
radiant upon the still rainbow shaded leaves,
brilliant, gleaming colors of nature.

The ground,
New, crisp, crackling, grounds
sleepy in cool shadows
awake, where the sun paints glistening rays along
the brown, brush-barren ground.

—Robert Makofsky



Broken Arrow Blues

"BUFFALO BILL'S DEFUNCT!"

Screams the loudspeaker here at Chicago Airport.
And just because you are standing over me,
slashing my mouth for the last time
doesn't mean the worms are not stretching toward your heart.
You hang around me as if I were a barber pole,
innocently red-striped.
Your tongue turns on the sweetness of my mouth.

Well, I will tell you, my frontier friend—
I wear welts beneath these clothes.
You, my handsome herdsman,
cracked your arm across my back,
carving me with your caress
and every flinch of pain you called delight.
I wanted that steel trap set inside me
and sprung like a switchblade.
That slice, that spill, my red recompense.
You, conquering cowboy,
Pressed down your searing iron kiss
and believe me, this brand is no mouth.

I do not let on why I'm boarding this plane
With head high as the top of a totem,
And why I cannot look back at your face
And why, oh why, oh why . . .

Because, for love of me
you turned your eyes Indian-side out.
For me, you hauled your teepee
all the way from Reno

(Thousands of teepees
In your legend-land,
Do you send smoke to the moon?
Thousands of Buffalo Bills in Nevada,
And the women all wear guns)

I lay inside your tent, uncrosslegged, unarmed,
never wanting the pipe we passed to die,
listening, listening, listening to your heart (soft-drum)
breathing the smoke from your kindled eyes.
Opiate lover, whose signals are these?

Ruined camp, smoldering teepees, stretching worms . . .
"buffalo bill's defunct!"

Cries the loudspeaker.
From these windows my eyes follow the road
which striates the land going west—
It is a buffalo skin, brown as distance
And will not wind me up with you.
I am a prisoner on a plane.
My hand, broken arrow, has snapped last good-bye.
I am not brave in this silence—
My mouth, your red kiss, is crushed in your jaws like a berry.
(Your sweetness, Sweet William
to take to your grave)
I taste only airplane exhaust.
Not brave in my tight sealing of tears,
in calling this straight stake, a seat.
"buffalo bill's defunct,"
pipes the loudspeaker,
disguised as a stewardess' song:

they lie Bill they lie Bill they lie Bill, alive Bill
The clouds part as an open grave
and far below I see you striding
(tent rolled neatly on your back,
pipe in teeth). I see the smoke
curling, crawling, fat black worms
come stretching tight circles about my heart.

—Suzanne Underwood

The Stock Sale

The sale has run an hour.
I push space for my feet
On the crowded ramp
Above the stock arena
And find myself shouldered
Between two black-toothed tobacco chewers,
Who jaw their wads
Respecting seats below.
The rising odor of cattle and sweat
Shocks senses four years dulled by books.
All eyes fasten on thirty head
Lashed in by whip and pushers' cry:
The auctioneer throws his voice above the din
To pull forth the highest bid.
My sight cuts through cigar smoke
To rest on Papa's stained green coat
As he sits near the ring,
One hand to bearded face
His shoulders slumped.
He feels my gaze, turns: I wave.
Light touches his eyes. He smiles,
And I marvel that
Pride in my farmer father
Has escaped extinction
In the education of my mind.

—Karla Showalter

Montage

For mate, I want a father's arms for comfort and for healing,
To rebuke and accept and deflate ghosts to proportion,
To coddle at fireside and catch from shellshock reeling;

A brother's mind to race on endlessly, imagination
To challenge just before need and beyond words
And consider laughter best cure for emotion;

A constant friend's perception at confessions heard,
His lifted eyebrow, frayed stories, ready ear
To grasp with ease moods merely inferred;

A lover's hands to touch with tenderness times hard and sere,
To roughly master—then approach, trembling,
To fill, with exquisite hesitation, all the corners of my fear.

—Deborah Fairfield

"Dragomans" — Mary E. Graham

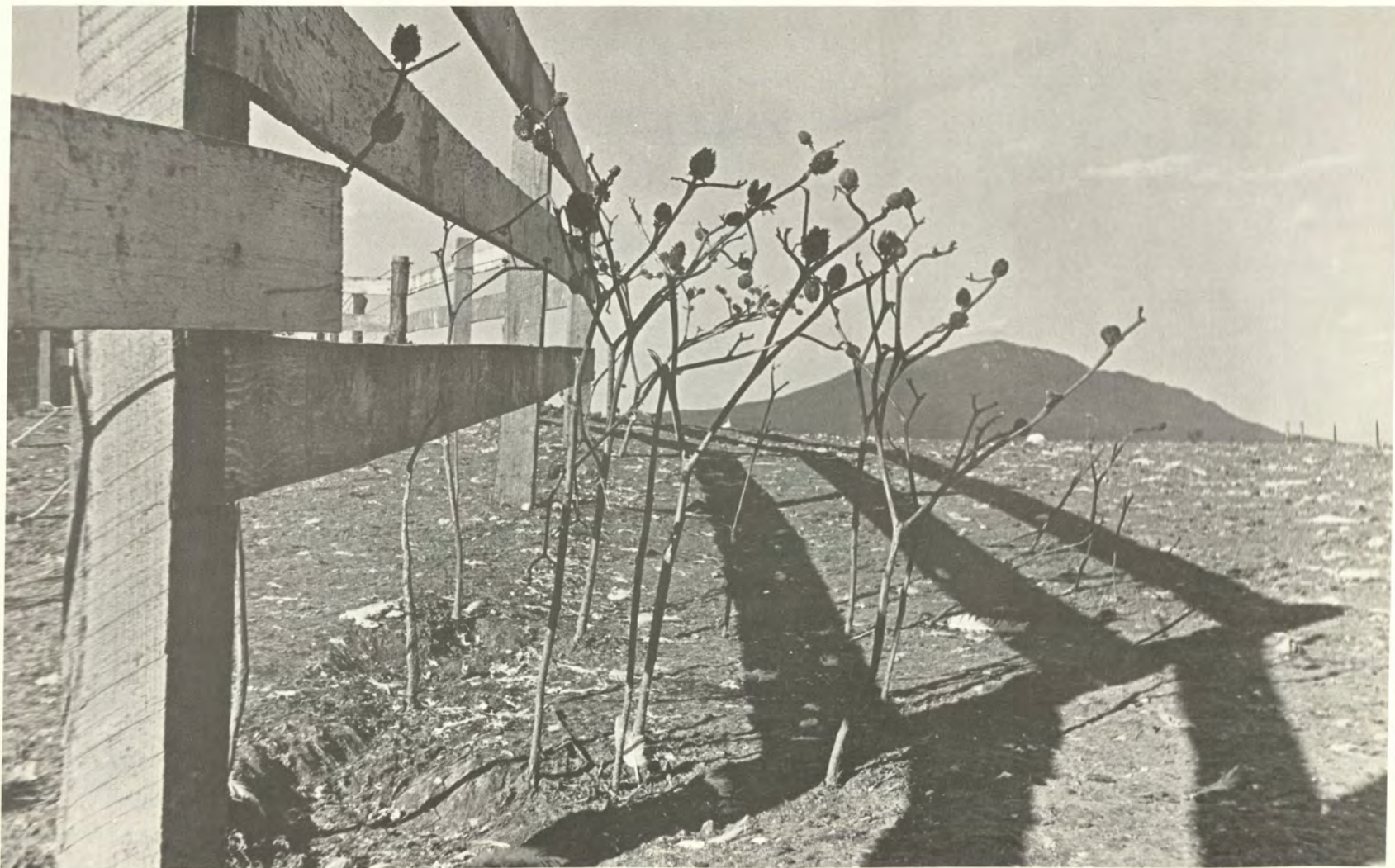




PULLEY

You are, my hand-folding mother,
 Saving me with favors
Cabled up on a line that works invisibly.
 From where I watch
I see only one closed eye
 (You pray in profile)
Your breast, releasing its burden of breath
 Falls in submission, again, again—
Which of my sins are you sending up now?
 (Your lips shape prayers, whispered in air)
How much pardon unpinches your brow
 And eases the gathered line of your mouth!
Watching your mysterious breast,
 I believe its work, that rise, that fall,
And if my faith in your prayer be air
 (Air induced from the work of your breast)
Then let my breath be doubly strung
 With yours, both pulling out and in.

—*Suzanne Underwood*



"Fence" — Mary Graham

Men's Bodies/Urban

Risk lures motion: former laws retreat.
The child-man caught in concrete yearns to run
and sized by stone he pauses young—
he leaps, he lopes, he finally strolls.

The urge persists—sidewalks, corners make the dare
and held in check, he moves just short of flight.

Trousers mold the leg, a fleeting draught announces him,
entering rooms, leaving cars,
doors slam to punctuate restraint.

His first dream is—to run, running, have run, will run—
a despairing conjugation down his days.
His first thirst—for space, ahead, behind.

Constraint, the watcher's joy, gives way by one degree beyond the just,
one urgent flex beyond the needed, then takes rein again.

He walks, a humming of the flesh,
he strolls, a prayer of bone,
he waits to reap the harvest of the hip.

—Diane Ivone

The Harvest

— Frank N. Barker

Jordie Goodworker awoke in a cold sweat, his mind fighting off the dregs of the dream which had terrorized him for a week. As his heart gradually slowed, he could hear the peaceful breathing of the other boys around him, sleeping in their comfortable bunks. An occasional restless stirring caused springs to creak, but that sound wasn't enough to keep Jordie awake, as troubled sleep again overcame him. Jordie soon re-awoke with a start. The dream had occurred again. The same vicious doctor had chased him with a butcher knife. Jordie felt his heartbeat to make sure it was still there. He shuddered at the memory of the doctor.

Jordie lay still for a minute, then eased himself out of the bunk and dropped to the cool tile. He tiptoed across the floor and opened the front door where the warm Florida night air brushed his face. The guard sitting outside the door saw him.

"Hi, Jordie. How's the kid? Couldn't sleep again, huh?"

"No," said Jordie.

"Why don't I take you over to see the doctor and . . ."

"No! Don't wanna see the doctor!"

"Okay, Jordie. Don't get shook. Why don't you just walk around in the yard?"

"All right."

Jordie stepped out the door and walked in the dewy grass. The moon lit up the trees outside the fence and reflected dully off the soft pastel walls of the other barracks buildings. Jordie thought and thought. He knew why he was here. He wondered if he should tell the other boys. "No! They're all stupid. They'd never listen to me anyway. They oughta die!"

Jordie thought about dying and about how hungry he had been when the Farm had found him wandering in the streets and had taken him in. He didn't like being hungry, but he didn't want to die, either. He started running. His small legs carried him through the sand pile where the smaller children played and over the baseball field. He heard the guard yell.

"Jordie! Stop or I'll . . . I'll shoot!" He emphasized this by firing a shot into the air with his pistol. Another guard shouted.

"Don't shoot, Bob. He's too valuable!"

Bob started running after Jordie, as the yard was immediately bathed by floodlights. The other guards were holding back the other boys who were standing gaping in their pajamas. The dull blue of the submachine guns gleamed slightly in the floodlights. Bob was catching up. Jordie turned his head but didn't slow down. His side began to ache. He was almost to the fence . . .

Bob's strong hand caught the waistband of his

pajamas, then slung him under his arm to carry him back.

"Don't take me back, Bob, I don't wanna die!" By kicking, he nearly succeeded in shaking himself loose, but Bob held tight.

"Put him in the cooler and don't let any of the other boys come close to him. Now that he knows, he'll have to go to the Inner Farm."

"Yes, sir. Come on, Jordie," said Bob. Jordie, still kicking under Bob's arm, had little choice in the matter.

Jordie sat in the cooler, isolated from the rest of the Farm. He cried and muttered over and over, "I don't wanna die, I don't wanna die!" He spent the rest of the night that way, crying and watching TV and scratching his name on the wall with a nail.

Jordie's first view of the Inner Farm came from the inside of the Farm truck.

"It's just like the other place," he thought, "except there's less guards." The boys in the yard peered into the truck, pressing their urchin faces to the window. "Also, there's less fences," he thought. "I bet everybody knows here. If we all get together, maybe we can escape!"

A guard took Jordie to see the Registration Officer.

"Name?"

"Jordie Goodworker, 34567."

"Birthdate?"

"Spring, 1969."

"Let me see your ID mark." Jordie stuck out his wrist. The officer checked the 34567 on the wrist, then said: "Okay, Goodworker, we'll see how good a worker you are the day after tomor-

row. You'll work in the Cornsquad. Tonight, you'll get your first treatment." He checked the registration book. "And you'll be assigned to Barracks Four when your treatment is completed . . ."

"Treatment? You mean with doctors and everything?"

"Yes, but don't worry, Goodworker, it won't hurt."

"But doctors . . .," said Jordie, shaking his head.

"By tomorrow, you won't be afraid of them anymore." The man smiled. "You run along and get acquainted with the rest of the boys."

Jordie thought: "Now's my chance to get the guys to help me." He walked out to the compound, trying not to appear excited. The others were having a rest period, and were milling around, talking and joking. Jordie ran to the first boy, a boy of about his own age, and whispered: "We're gonna die!"

"Yeah, I know. Isn't it great?"

Jordie was aghast. "You know?"

"Sure doesn't everybody? My name's Johnny. What's yours?"

"J-Jordie."

"What barracks are you in?"

"Umm, four."

"Great, you can sleep in the bunk over me, okay?"

"All right."

"Well, I gotta go back to work. See you later, Jordie." He started to leave.

"Hey, Johnny?"

"Yeah?"

"How long have you been here?"

"All my life." He walked away.

"What're you going to do to me?"

"Nothing, Jordie. You just go to sleep wearing earphones and when you wake up, you'll feel all better."

"I'm all right, now," protested Jordie.

"Now, Jordie, we know about your dreams. You won't be afraid of doctors tomorrow."

Jordie lay down on the bed and allowed the earphones to be placed over his head. A low humming sound filled his head and five minutes later, he was asleep.

"Good morning, Jordie. You can wake up now." Jordie opened his eyes and sat up on the edge of the bed.

"Do you know who I am, Jordie?"

"Yes, you're the doctor."

"Are you afraid of me?"

"No."

"Are you going to die?"

"Yes."

"Do you mind dying?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I'm gonna help somebody when I die."

"How long have you been here, Jordie?"

"All my life."

"Okay, Jordie, go get your breakfast."

The loudspeaker called Jordie in from the corn field. He had made many friends since he had come to the Inner Farm and had gotten a new name.

"Jordie Smilefellow, report to the Medical Office," the PA blared.

"Hi, Doc."

"Hiya, Jordie. Jordie, this is Mr. Gardiner." Jordie nodded at the heavy-set man across from the doctor. The man spoke.

"So this is the fine lad who is going to save my son's life."

Jordie looked inquiringly at the doctor. "Your time's come, Jordie."

Jordie smiled.

FEDERAL MEDFORM 2612

NAME: JORDIE SMILEFELLOW, (FORMERLY GOODWORKER) 34567

BIRTHDATE: SPRING, 1969

PARENTS: UNKNOWN

DATE OF DEATH: 5 JUNE 1979

PURCHASE PRICE: \$3100

PHYSICIAN'S COMMENT: Donor's heart was transplanted into David C. Gardiner, 11, a rheumatic fever patient. Gardiner released from hospital in excellent condition on 10 June 1979. Donor's kidneys, liver, and blood frozen for future use. Blood type: O positive.

Samuel H. Brown, M.D.

Federal Transplant Farm (Inner) #106
Lakeland, Florida 32075

Elegy for Edith

Hello again, Edith . . .

It's just as I predicted.

I knew you wouldn't stay away too long.

Oh, I cried a few polite tears

But I really couldn't grieve your departure honestly.

Well, stick around, old gal,

I've got a lot for us to think about.

I've some Browning due tomorrow,

Would you care to stay for tea and work it over?

There's no sense rushing off—

I mean, my god, you're on no time schedule now.

So you're finally going to make that trip to Yorkshire

And meet some English bards,

Milton, Spenser, Shakespeare (you were always partial to him).

If you get a chance, ask Geoffrey if the Franklin

really soaked his bread with wine.

You never did tell us the whole story of those pilgrims!

Well, Edith, I can't say I miss your smiling face—

You seldom smiled, you know,

And you were a terror behind that podium.

But I saw behind your stoney mask and knew you cared.

I haven't been to visit your new home.

I know I'd find it empty—you'd be at some committee meeting

Organizing a new literary society or festival of arts.

How you ever fit so much into twenty-four hours I'll never know,

But it did some good, Edith.

They're going to remember you for a long time.

They tell me I can take your place in another year.

I doubt that anyone could . . .

But I'd like to try.

Now let's get on with it—

I know how small talk bores you.

Let's have that cup of tea and keep the bags for seconds.

Do you suppose Elizabeth was Portuguese?

—Susan Fernandes

Eversince the innocent inception
of his conception
from first his taste of
slap-breathed air
Earth-baby

mind
body and
soul

is torn of inborn philosophical
perception of his conception

and laid upon a man-made

alter in a man-made room and
in youth too young to
see

a self-grazed path

falls into the Traditional Sea
of man-fetched mania

where he
swims around

for
several thousand years
treading the life of his
fascist-like fishes who tell
him which waters to swim
and float in
and not to
listen to the orphaned
Diabolical Demon Delinquents

whose fins have touched to the
apogees of their genesis
and have seen their reflections
in un-indoctrinated
Mirrors of the Mind

where-to young Earth-baby Fish
mind-bended and blind from birth
and filled to the gills with what
the elders have seemingly skilled

swims around hopefully hoping
his waters won't run dry and
his prayed-upon moral eternity
internally inferred from external sources

will come with his non-dying death
which he may or may not believe in

when suddenly
after just being told
not to swim near the
Impious Circular Corals
by a fungus bespeckled old man fish

a sea-storm of enormous
ferocity whips by and
Earth-baby Fish is swallowed
by the laughing mouth of the
Terminal Tempest
and very soon thereafter

drowns
and
dies
and
lazily tumbles to the bottom
of the sea
where he spiritlessly rots
and decays
and silently forms into a
love-bending
spectrum
of
genetic
blue-sea coral

—Chris Holt

Sweet Bird

Sweet Bird
upon my midnight tree
Sleep soft
Awaken
not now
Prepare thy soul for morning's cry

The sun a limp
and mouldy mass
 Sleep Sleep
 Sleep Sleep

With head in wing
I see thee fluff
A shudder of some
worldly fright?

Fear not
I bid thee rest thy head
For God looks over
thee in bed

—Darrell Meyer

A Rainy Day

Beneath clouds of cotton grey
The ground eats itself green
As warm drops
batter our eyes.

—Robert Makofsky

On a Fountain in Brussels

Oblivious to passerby opinion he stands,
his clear perpetual water forming a pool around him.
His tiny arch (no adult here)
ends with a simple splash, swirling in a circular latrine,
draining beneath the square.

Legend says he lived, this bronze infant
with piped-in-plumbing, and was heir to half of Brussels.
Releasing talking father's hand, he wandered one day,
infatuated with the active city,
(moving carriages and humming choruses of conversation)
and was out of sight in a moment.

Realizing their loss, his parents searched,
but crowds can easily conceal.
In the frivolity of doting wealth,
his sire issued a swift decree,
that wherever his only son was found,
in whatever act, he would erect a monument,
declaiming to the world the value of prodigals returned—
a Belgian fatted calf.

And so the fountain stands,
the sporting relief of four-year-olds,
three feet of bronze spouting fluid,
forever declaring a double indiscretion.

—Elizabeth Doss



—H. Carter

Afterthought

Where the word fails, the flesh shall claim its own.
Here, while the tongue recites its broken tale,
the eye shall swim, the hand shall mark a trail
along the boundry between blood and bone.

Enter the sea, and flayed desires reply
in kind: a sullen roll, a bitter crest,
this moving toward the end. Our twin bequest
shall beach us swiftly on the tongue's next lie.

Never a saint be found who would delay
over a ritual not schooled by time
To better than this is: the tongue's quick rhyme,
the flesh's slow descent from beast to prey.

Where the flesh fails, the tongue takes up its drone:
explain, exhort, enjoin the hip to heart—
a silly hobby, this; a lesser art
still clumsy, ages hence, when we are gone.

—Diane Ivone

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